



La Voz

Newsletter of the National Organization of Professional Hispanic
Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

May, 2006

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President's Message

By Bertha Venegas
NOPHNRCSSE President

Greetings to members and partners of NOPHNRCSSE. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members for supporting me throughout my tenure. I sent many letters on behalf of the organization asking NRCS leadership for their support of members to participate on committees and the national training conference. Budgets are tight and every year it's a challenge for states to provide training opportunities to their employees.

I want to thank all the committee chairs and members for their hard work and dedication to the organization especially the planning team for putting together an outstanding agenda for our national conference in Orlando. Remember that our organization is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a not for profit organization. This means if you choose to volunteer on a committee or as an officer, you have committed to spend your personal time in advancing the goals of the organization.



Our organizations' mission **is to motivate and mentor members for leadership roles to assist NRCS and partners in delivering natural resources conservation**. If you believe in our mission then you need to continue supporting the organization. Continue to provide your support by volunteering your time so we can make this organization bigger and better.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your President. As a lifetime member, I will continue to support the NOPHNRCSSE leadership so we can continue advancing our goals.

See you in Florida!

Bertha T. Venegas

The National
Council, 2005-2006

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**REGISTRATION
for the
Conservation Tours**



Name _____

Indicate tour choices by numbering in order of preference (1 for first choice, 2 for second, and 3 for third). Tours are offered on a first-come, first-served basis due to limited space.

_____ **Tour #1 - The Disney Wilderness Preserve**

Lunch included. Maximum number of participants is 80.

- **Guided Hikes:** This tour is based on the plant communities found on pine flatwoods ecosystems and the natural process needed to sustain this system. The hike is one mile long with a boardwalk overlook to Lake Russell at the halfway point. Guided walks will take approximately one hour.
- **Swamp Buggy Tour:** This is your chance to see wildlife that calls the preserve their home. The tour will take approximately one and a half hours.
- **Canoe Tours:** This one-hour guided tour around Lake Russell is a great way to learn about the importance of Florida's wetlands. This undeveloped cypress lake is a rare site for this region, and participants are typically impressed by the beauty of its 540 acres.

_____ **Tour #2 - Lake Apopka**

Lunch included. Maximum number of participants is 46.

Lake Apopka was once the most polluted lake in the Southeast. View former farm fields that are now restored wetlands. The East Central RC&D will explain its monitoring of pesticide levels in fish and invertebrates, egg shell thickness studies, avian mortality, water level fluctuations, and wildlife responses.

_____ **Tour #3- Seven Eleven Ranch**

Lunch included. Maximum number of participants is 100.

Osceola Soil and Water Conservation District and NRCS have worked with Hayman's 711 Ranch for almost 20 years. They have been involved with EQIP, 3,000 acres in GRP, and Best Management Practices. All these practices have enhanced the natural beauty of the property. Some of the land uses are sod farm, peat farm, wildlife habitat, and pasture. They have been nominated for the Environmental Stewardship Award through the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Send this registration form to:

Rosa Reyes, Local Arrangements Chairperson, 750 South Military Trail, Suite G, West Palm Beach, FL 33415-3963, rosa.reyes@fl.usda.gov.

If you have questions, call Rosa Reyes at (561) 683-2285 or email her at rosa.reyes@fl.usda.gov or fax (561) 683-8205.



**Living History of NOPHNCSE
(as told by it's members)**

**A proposal by Sharyn Alvarez, Virginia
National FWPM**

Action: Develop a history of NOPHNCSE through the words, thoughts and memories of its members.

Purpose: To capture information of the Organizations beginnings as well as its accomplishments during its 14 years of existence from the people who know.

Format: Have each member interested write an essay (500 words maximum) about an aspect of the organizations history as they remember it. Essays can be written on topics such as:

NOPHNCSE – The Beginning

The Officers (written by those who served as):

- Presidents
- Vice Presidents
- Executive Vice Presidents
- Treasurer
- Secretaries

The Committees

- Perspectives of Committee Chairs – how they developed the committee, the accomplishments

- Perspectives of Committee Members – recalling their participation

The Training Conferences

- Each writer can write an essay on a particular training conference of their choice.

Membership – what it has meant to be a member of NOPHNCSE

Editing: Please make sure that your composition submission is reviewed and proofread for content, clarity and grammatical accuracy.

Result: We will have a collection of NOPHNCSE History as told by the members who experienced it. Everyone's voice would be heard. History is not the story of an event as told by one person. It must be an accurate reflection that includes the thoughts of all who experienced the events.

Deadline: January 31, 2007 There is plenty of time to get your composition in. Smile.

All who are interested in participating in this activity please send your composition to me by email at sharyn.alvarez@wdc.usda.gov.



Exhibit Space, the best way to showcase your products, research, projects, opportunities...

What do I have to do?

- ✓ Fill the registration form and send it to:
Exhibits c/o Brunilda Velez,
PO Box 39
Durand, WI 54736-1628

How much does it cost?

- ✓ The cost of the space is \$575.00 dollars. Exhibit Space will include an 8'x 8' floor space, a table, two chairs, listing in the Conference Program, and one Conference Registration Fee.

But If I don't want to participate in the conference, I just want to show my products?

- ✓ The cost of the setup without a conference registration is \$250.00 dollars.

How do I pay?

- ✓ Check, Credit Card or use the Tax ID account to pay.

What day do I have to setup my exhibit?

- ✓ The exhibit could be setup on Sunday afternoon or on Monday morning.

Take advantage of this great opportunity to participate in the conference and visit with conservation professionals from around the Nation. For more information call Brunilda Velez at: 715-672-8663 ext. 21 Fax: 715-299-0624 or visit the NOPHNRCSE website at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/hispanic/>

From: Gilberto Guerrero

Date: 05/01/2006

Subject: 2006 Hispanic Heritage Month Poster Contest

Message: The contest is open to all Natural Resources Conservation Service employees, full time and part time. There will be a \$300 spot award given to the employee whose entry is selected. Please send your entries to the Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager in your State. Entries must be received no later that COB on July 28, 2006.



14th Annual
NOPHNRCSE
National Training Conference
Orlando, Florida
July 24 – July 27, 2006



We need your auction items

No matter how big or small

They all make a difference!

Homer Sanchez - Texas

Homer Sanchez was recently recognized for his selection as the NRCS Range Conservationist of the Year at the Society for Range Management annual meeting in Vancouver, Canada. Presenting the award for the agency was Dennis Thompson, National Range and Grazing Lands Ecologist.

Homer began his NRCS career in 1978 at Jayton, Texas, working in several field offices, zone offices, as the State Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Coordinator, and the State Range Management Specialist for Texas. He is currently a range management specialist on the Grazing Lands Technology Development team, located at the Central National Technology Support Center at Fort Worth.

In the past three years, Homer has revised the standards for eight conservation practices dealing with rangelands for the Texas field office technical guide. All of these revisions reflected a coordinated effort with internal and external rangeland management specialists. He has also conducted numerous field observations to document conservation trials and research to update the Field Office Technical Guide.

Additionally, Homer has worked with the Lady Bird Johnson National Wildflower Center in Austin to host a partnership conference on the development of Ecological Site Descriptions, served as technical liaison to the Coastal Prairies Conservation Initiative to fostered innovative range conservation work, and provided technical training in a variety of rangeland-related practices to both NRCS employees and partners.

Homer is very active in the National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees and a leader in his church and the community.

April 6, 2006

Dear Members

Following current professional standards for Non-Profit Organizations, four documents should provide guidance for governing our organization.

1. Mission Statement - brief, very concise and very descriptive
2. By-Laws - brief, must meet 501(c) 3 IRS requirements
3. Policy Handbook - Very detailed, states policies to run organization
4. Robert's Rules of Order

The adoption of a new Mission Statement and By-Laws are an agenda item for the Business Meeting at the Annual Training Conference in Florida.

The Policy Handbook is under construction for review and adoption in 2007.

Please review the draft copies of the Mission Statement and By-Laws.
Please contact me with any questions, problems, concerns, or suggestions.

In order to make changes for final draft presentation during the General Business Meeting please respond by May 22 2006.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Patrick Conner, Chair
Constitution and By-Laws Committee
830.9314661
pat.conner@tx.usda.gov

We the “National Organization of Professional Hispanic Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees” (NOPHNRCSE) believe in the spirit of cooperation and support to the Natural Resources Conservation Service in its mission.

We have elected to form an Organization in order to assist the NRCS deliver program benefits/services to the Hispanic community and highlight the value that Hispanics bring into any organization and the value that Hispanics will continue to bring to the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

NOPHNRCSE is a key component of a multi-culture and diverse workforce that provides for Hispanic employee representation at all levels in direct proportion to the population of Hispanic taxpayer/customers/stakeholders.

NOPHNRCSE serves as a strong link between NRCS and the Hispanic community. Membership in the Organization is open to everyone. We offer this invitation for All NRCS employees to join.

Motto

“Hispanics — Partners for Success”

Mission

Our Mission is to motivate and mentor members for leadership roles.

This will assist NRCS and other partners deliver natural resource conservation.

Vision

Our vision is professional organization working in harmony with all partners for natural resources conservation.

Guiding Principles

We are committed to the following Guiding Principles:

- Stewardship of Natural Resources
- Collaboration, cooperation, consensus-building and collective action
- Fairness and equity
- Sharing our heritage and cultures
- Creative, innovative and critical thinking
- Honoring contributions to the Hispanic community

Goal

The goal of the National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees is to assist NRCS, in technology transfer, information, and the application of program benefits and services, to the Hispanic rural/urban community.

Purpose

The purpose of the National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees is to strengthen NRCS efforts in the recruitment, retention, development, and advancement of Hispanics.

The Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, William Richards, endorsed this organization in a letter dated December 15, 1992.

Submitted as a DRAFT for review by General Membership
Patrick Conner, Chair Constitution & By-Laws Committee
April 6, 2006

Article I— Name of the Organization

The name of this Organization shall be the “National Organization of Professional Hispanic Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees.” (NOPHNRCSE) Hereafter referred to in this document as The Organization.

Article II— Governance

The policy governance documents for The Organization are the Articles of Incorporation, the Mission Statement, the By-Laws, a Policy Handbook and “Roberts Rules of Order”.

The Organization conducts all General Membership Business Meetings and National Council Meetings of the Organization in an orderly manner, in accordance the most recent edition of “Robert’s Rules of Order.”

The most recent edition of Robert’s Rules of Order provides guidance for all aspects of this Organization.

Article III — Business Organization

No financial resources or net earnings of the Organization shall be used to the personal benefit of, or be distributed to its members, officers, regional representatives, or other private persons.

The Organization shall pay a reasonable compensation for services rendered and make payments to conduct business activities.

The Organization shall make distributions for the purposes set forth in Article X.

The Organization shall not participate in the publishing, distribution of materials or statements, for or against, any existing or proposed legislation, or any political campaign on behalf of any party or candidate for public office.

This Corporation is exclusively for charitable purposes within the section 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the Articles, the Corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax under section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Service Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law),

or
(b) by a corporation contributions to which are deductible under section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal

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Article IV — Membership

A. Eligibility — Any person or organization subscribing to the Mission Statement, By-laws and Policy Handbook of the Organization is eligible to apply for membership.

B. Class — The following are membership classes in this Organization.

- Charter/Regular
- Life
- Honorary
- Associate
- Institutional
- Student

C. Dues – Policy Handbook list Membership Dues for each membership class.

Article V — Officers

The following Officers make up the National Council

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Executive Vice-President
4. Treasurer
5. Secretary
6. Regional Council Representatives

Article VI — Committees

The National Council designates and directs any Committees.

Article VII — Meetings

The Organization holds one general membership business meeting in conjunction with the annual training conference.

The Organization may hold other general membership meetings if determined necessary by the President and a majority of the National Council.

The President or a majority of the National Council calls other meetings as needed.

Article VIII — Quorum

- A. A quorum for the transaction of business at any General Membership Business Meeting of the Organization shall consist of 10 active members of the Organization, including a majority of the National Council.
- B. A National Council quorum shall consist of a majority of the members of the Council.
- C. Members of the National Council need not be physically present at a common meeting location, for meetings other than General Membership Business Meetings. Therefore, use all available communication means to conduct National Council Called Meetings and to meet the quorum requirements.

Article IX — Amendments

- A. Charter, Regular, Lifetime, and/or Institutional members must submit in writing all proposals to amend any of the Organization's Governance Documents, which consist of Articles of Incorporation, Mission Statement, By-Laws, and Policy Handbook.
- B. Submit all written proposed amendments to your National Council Regional Representative.
- C. Your National Council Regional Representative will present your proposed amendment at the Annual General Membership Business Meeting or any other meeting of the National Council.
- D. Amendments require a two-thirds vote of the National Council.
- E. The amendment(s) shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

Article X — Dissolution of the Organization—

An affirmative, two-thirds vote, of this Organization voting members will be required to dissolve the Organization.

Upon dissolution of this Corporation, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the Corporation, distribute the remaining assets to a non-profit fund, foundation, or corporation, which has established a tax-exempt status under section 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Submitted as a DRAFT for review by the General Membership
Patrick Conner, Chair Constitution & By-Laws Committee
April 6, 2006

Conference Registration – Deni Hazell

The conference registration form is now available on the website. Remember that Early Registration deadline is June 21st! Don't wait until the last minute!

Important! Due to a formatting error, the form had to be re-posted, so make sure you are using the latest version available on the site.

The form is an easy-to-use Excel spreadsheet where you only have to enter your information and it will calculate your fees. For conference attendants, meals are included in the registration fee for the days they choose to attend. If bringing guests with you, indicate number of guests that will participate of each meal. Then simply print out the form, make sure you sign the bottom for payment purposes, and mail or fax it to:

Deni Hazell – NRCS Agricultural Engineer
1304 N. Hillcrest Pkwy. Suite A
Altoona, WI 54720
Fax (715) 832-6975

If anyone encounters any problems with the spreadsheet, please notify Deni Hazell at deni.hazell@wi.usda.gov or (715) 832-6547 extension 125.

As a reminder, you cannot charge your registration cost to a Government-issued travel card. Registration fees are not a reimbursable item under the terms established for Government travel card users. If paying by credit card, make sure it is a Government purchase card, or a personal one. If you have mistakenly provided a Government travel card number for this purpose, please contact Deni Hazell immediately.

You will receive a notification via e-mail when your payment is processed, and receipts will be given during registration at the conference.

Hotel Room Reservations deadline for the NOPHNCSE Conference is June 21st. Reservation details are located on the NOPHNCSE website.